

WHEN the Prince of Wales visited Nigeria in 1925, the local Administration, believing that he should be given ample opportunity to take vigorous exercise, built a string of squash courts along his route. For the coming Royal tour of Nigeria much of the extra expenditure has gone into such utilitarian projects as new paved roads, but an athletic touch will be added to the Queen's entourage by the presence of the Governor-General, Sir James Robertson.

He was a power in the Oxford rugby pack after the first



Sir James Robertson

world war, and he now gives enthusiastic support to the Lagos rugby club, where the tropical climate limits the duration of matches to twenty minutes.

Sir James's powerful physique, coupled with his practice of holding his head on one side when speaking, has earned him the nickname "Bull," and he likes to make much of the idea that he is just a big, bluff, simple Scotsman. In fact, like many another of Balliol's innumerable Scots, he has much of the intellectual power associated with that college.

#### Negotiator-General

As an orator Sir James Robertson lacks finesse; but during his thirty-one years in the Sudan political service—he was Civil Secretary from 1945 to 1953—he mastered the art of negotiation. He is adept at handling small conferences and has the patience to master details and listen to verbose arguments.

These qualities will be put to the test in the constitutional talks that are expected to come soon after the Queen's visit. As Lord Chelmsford and numerous other Colonial Secretaries have discovered, the problems of Nigeria are exceptionally complex.

#### Diplomatic Parties

THIS year's American Budget, which was unveiled last week, calls for the expenditure

of nearly £24,000 million. One of the smallest items is a request for £257,000 to be spent on diplomatic entertainment abroad.

The smallness of this sum—which is £100,000 bigger than last year's appropriation—is a source of bitter irritation to many American diplomats who believe that much goodwill is forfeited by this cheapsparing on cheese straws.

Some relief is provided by the American practice of appointing high diplomatic amateurs as Ambassadors in some of the most important capitals. These men dig into their own pockets to pay the bills; and some American Ambassadors in London are reputed to have spent nearly £30,000 of their own money. This is cold comfort for the American career diplomat who tries to make friends and influence people without a private income of his own.

#### Honourable Exception

NEXT Friday's Mozart bicentenary celebrations prompt me to salute the man who most signally has not caused in on the occasion. This is Professor Otto Erich Deutsch, whose mammoth documentary—biography of Mozart has been retarded, of set purpose, until the distractions of the bicentenary are over.

Professor Deutsch, though Viennese alike by birth and by disposition, has British nationality and lived for nearly twenty years in this country. No one could be less of an absent-minded professor; and his interests, though prodigiously detailed, are panoramic. (It was he, the world's foremost Schubert scholar, who campaigned for years to get "The Mikado" into the repertory of the Volkoper, and has more lately done the same for "Oklahoma").

Professor Deutsch has expunged from the Mozart canon a number of unauthentic portraits. (Only ten, in the end, survived his examination.) He will not be among next Friday's speech-makers; doubtless he remembers that Mozart once said: "What always gives me most pleasure is silent approval."

#### The Queen's Music

THERE has been a diplomatic alteration in the programme of the Edinburgh Festival's opening concert which the Queen will probably attend on Sunday, August 19.

Sir Thomas Beecham was to have conducted the Royal Philharmonic in Beethoven's Mass in D. Now the organisers have decided that it would be

inappropriate to ask the Queen to listen to a Latin Mass in Edinburgh on the Sabbath. Its place will be taken by Beethoven's Choral Symphony.

#### An Army Remembered

WHEN privileged, not long ago, to read through the proofs of Field-Marshal Sir William Slim's forthcoming history of the Burma campaign and the Fourteenth Army, I was fascinated by his outpourings of judgement on the men who shared with him the vicissitudes of that story of disaster and triumph.

The Field-Marshal has a tactician's eye for those clashes of powerful personalities which are the stuff of history and Mountbatten, Alexander, "Vinegar" Joe, Bellwell and Orde Wingate are among those who come in for shrewd and critical analysis.

#### Battlegrounds

Sir William Slim made it his business to see that few of his near-million men did not feel that they knew him personally.

One night at forward headquarters during the advance into Burma he happened to come into the War Room just when the officer on duty was reviewing the campaign for the benefit of a younger and greener colleague. Sir William was in time to see the older man place a portentous finger on the situation map.

"Uncle Bill," he announced, "will fight a battle here." "Why?" his junior asked. "Because," came the answer, "he always fights a battle going in where he took a licking coming out!"

#### Snow Torture

FOR the first time Great Britain is entering a team of cross-country skiers in the Winter Olympics, which begin at Cortina on Thursday. Ten men—of whom five are Regular Army officers—will take part in the 15-, 30-, and 50-kilometre races as well as the 4 x 10 kilometre relay.

Major-General J. E. T. Younger of the Army Ski Association tells me that "these are some of the most exciting and strenuous races in the world" and even this description seems to me a significant understatement.

A third of the course goes downhill, a third is on the flat, while the uphill third includes climbs of 1,000 vertical feet. To add to the difficulties part of the route runs through woods where the skiers, blinded by exhaustion, may easily come to grief.

The Scandinavians and the

Russians are the acknowledged experts but the British team has hopes of beating everyone else. I have nothing but admiration for the team leader, Captain J. Spencer, and his vigorous colleagues.

#### Chaplin's Atom

CHARLIE CHAPLIN, who left his Swiss villa last week to pay a flying visit to London, seems to have been impressed by the "Atoms for Peace" conference which was held at Geneva last summer.

When he was last in London twelve months ago, Mr. Chaplin launched a strong attack on atom scientists for producing nuclear weapons. Now it seems that the theme of his next film, which he hopes to get into production before long, will be the

effort of a "little king" to bring cheap atomic power to his people.

#### Crime Can Pay

THE course of justice has not run particularly smoothly in this country of late, but I cannot recall any British case that has ended on such a ironic note as a recent American court martial at the Chamute Air Force Base in Illinois.

Major-General Byron Gates, who had commanded the base, was charged with giving preferential treatment to some private insurance firms. The court found him guilty and fined him £175.

Major-General Gates was recalled from retirement to face this court martial, and now the

Air Force has found that it must pay him an extra £1,025 to cover his new tour of active duty. If he had not been court-martialled General Gates would now be the poorer by £250.

#### Rich Ceremonial

FROM Monaco I hear that Prince Rainier has declared: "I want the richest ceremonial of the past revived for my beautiful wife." The local inhabitants have rallied to his call with enthusiasm and a State review is now scheduled to take place after his wedding to Miss Grace Kelly.

The principal contingent on parade will be the Monaco Army, which consists of sixty-five carabinieri. They will be followed by the Principality's

two motor fire-engine pumps and the fire brigade's tallest scaling ladder. The thirty firemen and the band of army cadets will wear a special uniform that has been ordered from the official tailor of West Point by Father Tuck, Prince Rainier's American chaplain.

#### Double Dame

Meanwhile local enthusiasts have been doing some research into the number of titles that will come to Miss Kelly after her marriage. Apart from being Her Serene Highness, the Princess of Monaco, she will also become Princess of Chateau-Porcien, Duchess of Mayenne, Duchess of Valentinois, and Duchess of Mazarin.

Now some genealogist with a bent for mathematics claims that she will be a marquise three times, a countess seven times, a baroness six times, and a Dame twice. This last title should have a particular appeal for Miss Kelly's old colleagues at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

#### Considered Trifles

BOOK sales make strange bedfellows; and my colleague Autolycus tells me that Sotheby's catalogue for January 30 and 31 ranges from a black-letter book of 1534, "An Argument wherein the Appraisal of Women is both Reproved and Defended," to a collection of thirty autograph manuscripts by J. M. Barrie.

Those who do not share my own aversion to Barrie will be glad to learn that the collection includes the prompt copy of the first production of "Peter Pan" and other manuscripts which give variant versions of the death of Captain Hook and the fate of the Lost Boys.

#### Max in Masquerade

From the other items in the two-day sale Autolycus

singled out for me a variety of historical fascinations. But I have elbowed aside George Washington, Elizabeth and Essex, and Lady Hamilton in favour of Lot 352, which comprises four snapshots, taken in 1937, of Mr. (now Sir) Max Beerbohm. These form part of quite a large group of desirable Maxiana, but their particular charm resides in the inscriptions which, in two cases, come from Sir Max's own hand. One reads, "Evidently not a man to be trifled with. A man



Max, 1937

of suet and iron. Max, 1937." The other photograph, part of which I reproduce herewith, is embellished with the words, "The trusted old Labour Leader, Max, 1937."

#### Turn About

"ICI, c'est a mon tour de dire": such ("Now it's my turn to laugh") is, I hear, the inscription which Groucho, the greatest of clowns, has had carved on the gate of the villa in the South of France to which in his seventy-sixth year, he has retired.